

## NEW BOOKS.

Continued from Tenth Page.

ropes in 1853, that may be accepted. The assumption that the shroud is that in which Christ was entombed, however, is based on more slender arguments, so that the question of authenticity must still remain open. The chief evidence Dr. Vignon relies on here is the resemblance of the face to certain early portraits of Christ, and the stigmata.

Whatever may be thought of the conclusion, the investigation is extremely interesting, and Dr. Vignon's volume with its pictures enables every one to judge for himself about the probability that the shroud may be genuine.

## More Stevenson in Samoa.

The admirers of Robert Louis Stevenson are so many that any bit of information about him, however unimportant, is sure of a sale and that may be safely anticipated for "Memories of Vailima" by Isabel Strong and Lloyd Osbourne (Charles Scribner's Sons). When the complete edition of Stevenson's Works was issued and a biography authorized by the family and written by a gentleman they had selected appeared, it was natural for the subscribers to expect that everything worth printing had been turned in by them and everything worth saying had been told. There is nothing, however, to prevent the people who gathered about Stevenson in his last years, and whose chief business seems to be to keep alive the cult of "Louis," from writing as many books of "remembrances" as they choose.

In this volume Mrs. Strong's chief contribution is "Vailima Table Talk," extracts from a diary she kept, mainly dealing with bits of talk while she was taking down "St. Ives" from dictation. There is more of the diary that she holds back. Perhaps some day we may have the real story of Stevenson's last days. Mr. Osbourne limits himself to "Mr. Stevenson's Home Life at Vailima," a home life on which residents in Samoa at the time may shed more light.

It is a pretty idea that Mrs. Strong writes about "Pola," the little Samoan boy of whom they made a pet. But we have seen indignant letters in Samoan newspapers about the treatment of little Pola when the Stevensons finally had tired of him and of Samoa.

Hasn't Stevenson been dead long enough for the truth about the Samoan business to be told and all the Vailima humbug to be exposed?

## A Good Book on the Negro.

An excellent and fair account of what the negro has accomplished and is doing in the United States has been written by the Rev. J. J. Pipkin, a black, with the title, "The Negro in Civilization, in History and in Citizenship" (N. D. Thompson Publishing Company). The title is misleading, for the reader might expect an argumentative book on the origin of the black race, whereas the author merely sums up in four or five pages the Biblical theory of descent from Ham, without comments. He turns at once to the more useful and practical record of what negroes have done in civilized communities, showing by specific instances their worth as soldiers, in the professions, in literature and art and more particularly in business and the handicrafts.

It forms a creditable and helpful record which nobody discussing the negro question can afford to overlook, and is by no means complete. Distinguished negroes of other lands are mentioned, but most of those whose careers are described are of the United States. Much space is devoted to what is being done for the race by Booker Washington and others and by the colleges and schools. The author has shown much taste in avoiding fulsome praise, when describing examples of the best his race can do. His tone in dealing with the relations with the whites is admirable.

The absence of polemic spirit is made more noticeable by the fact that Gen. John B. Gordon, former Senator from Georgia, a Southerner of the Southern type, writes for the book a preface, marked by the same good sense, moderation and kindly feeling in the matter of the negro problem. The book is illustrated with many and good portraits; that of Alexandre Dumas the older is very fine. An interesting chapter is the account taken from Julius Melbourn's long-forgotten book, in which Melbourn, a negro, tells of his visit to Thomas Jefferson at Monticello in 1815, and his dining there with Chief Justice Marshall, William Wirt, Samuel Dexter and other political men. A book that will be read and referred to.

## Andrew Lang on Mary Stuart.

Mr. Andrew Lang's foot is on his native heath in the second volume of his "History of Scotland from the Roman Occupation" (William Blackwood & Sons; Dodd, Mead & Co.), for Mary Stuart and her son fill it all. Mr. Lang's literary output has been so variegated and so profuse that it is hard to see where he finds time to learn anything about the things he writes of. He has been interested in Queen Mary, however, and has tried his hand more than once at unravelling the problems she presents. He is a competent authority on this matter, whether we accept his deductions and views of affairs or not. It may seem disproportionate to give up to Mary and her troubles one volume out of the three that tell the whole history of Scotland; that might be expected of an Englishman rather than from a Scot. Perhaps the sentimental and literary interest in her may excuse this, though the Reformation and the wedding together of England and Scotland may also seem to a latter-day Scot the most important events in his country's story. The reader, at any rate, will find here a lively narrative brought up to date, a story that many artists before Mr. Lang have tried to tell. It is the most scholarly piece of work he has done.

## Mr. Major After Bear.

Dropping Dorothy Vernon and Tudor England, Mr. Charles Major gets down to hard pan in his own Indiana in "The Bears of Blue River" (Macmillan). The bears are no Mississippi bears, but are always on hand and ready to be slaughtered by the strenuous fourteen-year-olds that are hunting them. These youths bear charmed lives, for they come out invariably with little harm from conflicts that would have done for older men. Mr. Major's string of bear stories is exciting; it seems superfluous for him to add to them a night-mare bear and wolf fight. There is plenty of healthy outdoor feeling and the author uses simpler and better English than he has accustomed us to from him. It is the best piece of work of Mr. Major's we have seen.

## Boston and Molasses.

Boston is an admirable town, fully conscious of its own worth, and at one time was the abode of several noted American authors. In those days there was talk of a "Mutual Admiration Society." We doubt if any member of that society or any Bostonian, however loyal, could stomach the

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## PUBLICATIONS.

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This first number doesn't strike *terrible*: it doesn't even strike *three*: but it is a safe start for it leaves lots of room for improvement: buy a copy and keep it until January 20 (when the February number will be out) just to see how much advance can be made by a progressive enterprise in a month.

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